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Moscow: Carter Exacerbates Tensions

By Kevin Klose
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Feb. 14—The Soviet Union today sharply attacked President Carter, saying he had "reaffirmed the course of undermining detente and exacerbating tensions" at his White House press conference yesterday.

Ignoring Carter's endorsement of a U.N. commission as a possible solution to the Tehran hostage crisis, the official Tass news agency in a Washington dispatch concentrated instead on what it termed his "open claims to the oil wealth of Iran and the whole of the Persian Gulf area."

Tass said, "Carter actually tried to justify U.S. interference in the internal affairs of the Iranian people" by refusing to assess for a questioner the CIA-backed restoration of the shah to power in Iran in 1933.

The negative description of the press conference, Carter's first in 11 weeks, is consistent with the way Moscow has portrayed Carter ever since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan last December. From the Kremlin's perspective, a peaceful resolution of the hostage crisis would only deepen Soviet difficulties as it seeks to restore relations with Moslem countries at the expense of the United States in the aftermath of the Soviet intervention.

"Without even asking the opinion of the Moslem countries, [Carter] declared that these states must take part in the Washington-inspired intervention against Afghanistan which the United States wishes to see pursued under a United Nations aegis," Tass said, referring to the president's suggestion that a Moslem-staffed peacekeeping force might be deployed in Afghanistan after any Soviet troop withdrawal.

The agency said the president used calumny against both Kabul and Moscow as part of his attempt to "advance a program for expanding the undisguised armed interference in the internal affairs of the Afghan people."

Tass repeated earlier Soviet charges that Carter was using "cold war jargon" in describing the administration's reprisals against the Soviet Union for the invasion. And the agency noted that the president "showered rude attacks on Sen. Edward Kennedy, his chief adversary in the Democratic Party." The Soviets have accused Carter before of using tough talk and the issue of retaliation against the Soviet Union to win reelection.

[In another development, the bulletin of the Supreme Soviet said, without explanation, that the decision to strip dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov of his awards and medals had been made two weeks before his arrest, according to United Press International.

[It said the action was decreed Jan. 8 by the presidium of the Supreme Soviet because Sakharov's activities had made him unworthy of the awards he had won. The physicist was arrested Jan. 22 and banished to the city of Gorki, 250 miles east of Moscow.]

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